

Eliminate Your Fears
Gaining Momentum in the New School Year

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What we're going to cover today...

- When is the right time to consider assessment and full neuropsychological assessment?
- If you choose to assess, what are the pros and cons of sharing the results with your child's school?
- Attending parent and school conferences...formal and informal
- Getting organized at home to support the school and the learning process
- What to do if your child is not making the kind of progress you know they can
- Understanding the difference between tutoring and Educational Therapy

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So you and your child have arrived to a new grade and your head is swimming! So many worries, ideas and questions!

- Do I need to reveal that my child has been assessed?
- How much information sharing is too much or not enough?
- Is this the year I test my child?
- Should I meet with my child's teacher and school?

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So many MORE worries, ideas and questions!

- Do I need additional support for my child this year?
- How do I help my child get organized?
- Technology, books, homework (plan/org skills)
- Programs being utilized, i.e. IXL, Read Naturally, etc.

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Should I have my child assessed this year?

- Look at specific learning struggles over last couple of years...Is your child falling further and further behind?
- Decide if typical interventions in the classroom are not working.
- Figure out if your child needs more than the average accommodations and modifications to be successful.
- Is your child feeling emotionally stressed and/or anxious?
- **Think about assessment**

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Pros and Cons of Assessment

<p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private testing is expensive • Public testing is such a process • Time consuming • Stressful for child and family • Results are too complicated and not useful • Always guessing about your child's learning issues 	<p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive understanding of your child's strengths and challenges • Practical recommendations for both the classroom and at home • Recommendations for remediation, depending on need • Utilizes objective testing tools that give a full picture of your child's intellectual abilities compared to current performance • Required for accommodations on standardized testing, i.e. ERB and SAT
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THE BIG QUESTION
SHOULD YOU SHARE THE RESULTS OF YOUR CHILD'S ASSESSMENTS?

<p>CONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wait and see what happens • New teacher could be influenced by results of report • Not sharing can result in being unproductive due to lack of information • Risk labeling your child • Parents feel as though they might lose control • Parents may not trust the school system enough to feel confident that information will be used in a beneficial way 	<p>PROS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be proactive puts parents in charge • Have ability to implement appropriate accommodations, modifications and recommendations • Teacher will have information needed to support your child and differentiate instruction • Opportunity for school to create all school success teams (public/private) • Allied professionals have a road map for helping your child succeed • You can give the school just the pages that pertain to recommendations
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THE BIG QUESTION
SHOULD YOU SHARE THE RESULTS OF YOUR CHILD'S ASSESSMENTS?

<p>CONS (continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers will treat my child differently • Assessments will go on my child's school record 	<p>PROS (continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to build trust with school • Sets the precedent to allow appropriate accommodations/modifications for your child throughout grades levels, as well as when transferring schools
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Taking a Proactive Step
Setting up a meeting with the school

- Set up school meetings at the beginning of school
- Introduce the teachers and school to your educational therapist for ongoing coordination
- Educational Therapist can give teachers ideas on how to differentiate instruction and clarify areas of strengths and weaknesses
- Go over all recommendations from the assessment so that teachers can give the appropriate accommodations and modifications
- Be transparent with the school so that they understand your child's learning profile
- Ask for help from the teacher with any issues you are having at home
- Set goals for the first 1/2 of school
- Agree to meet in 3 to 4 months for ongoing progress report
- Schools do not view learning issues as a negative any more

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Getting Organized at Home

- Ask for a set of school books to stay at home
- Download on a Kindle type device all literature books for the year
- Get audible books for extra support
- Use specific programs to support school work like Learning Ally or Raz Kids
- Find out how the school does homework assignments (online or agenda)
- Make your child accountable for homework assignments with setting up a specific time and place
- Create a sign-off system with teacher for homework assignments especially for younger students
- Know where homework and grades get posted online

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A little more about school meetings

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Main Purpose of the Meeting

To highlight what your child needs to be successful at the learning process and how to best meet those needs as a team.

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IEP or 504 or ILP?

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504

- Formal plan that schools develop to provide support for students who need it.
- They're covered under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, a civil rights law.
- Implements services and changes in the classroom to facilitate student learning in the general education classroom
- Student can have any disability and it must interfere with student's learning in the general education classroom
- Assessment is not part of process
- Rules for team members who compile the plan are less rigorous than IEP

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504

- No standard 504 plan and does not need to be in written form
- It provides specific accommodations, supports or services and who will be delivering each service
- Reviewed each year
- States do not receive extra funding for students with 504 plans.

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Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

- A formalized plan for a student to receive special education services in the school environment
- Itemizes and describes individualized special education and related services necessary for the child to succeed.
- This is a federal special education law.
- The student has one or more of the 13 disabilities listed in IDEA, i.e. learning disabilities, ADHD, or autism.
- Assessment can be part of this process.
- There are strict requirements about team members who create plan.

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Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

- Far more specific than 504 Plan,
- Document is reviewed each year and child is re-evaluated every three years to ensure services are still needed.
- 2 Resources
 - The Complete IEP Guide - How to Advocate for Your Special Ed Child (Attorney Lawrence M. Siegel)
 - All About IEPs - Answers to Frequently Asked Questions About IEPs (Peter W.D. Wright, Esq., Pamela Darr Wright, MA, MSW and Sandra Webb O'Connor, M.Ed.)

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Individualized Learning Plan (ILP)

- Used at private schools
- Informal version of an IEP
- Outlines areas of strength and challenge for student
- Lists goals and accommodations for each class
- Modifications are usually not part of an ILP
- If available, defines parameters of one-on-one or group support

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Regardless of the type of school conference you're attending, make sure you...

- Bring copy of current plan (formal or informal) if you have one
- Bring a gift (inexpensive and simple)
- List of questions you'd like to get answered
- Put yourself in the driver's seat and send an email to the teacher ahead of time indicating your agenda
- Consider whether you might need to hire a professional to help advocate
- Request longer time if you're concerned 10-20 minutes will not be enough time to cover what you'd like to discuss
- Consider including your child, at least for part of the time, if appropriate

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Regardless of the type of school conference you're attending, make sure you...

- Get update on grades, academic progress
- Get update on behavior
- Identify places your child is struggling, get as specific as possible
- Discuss ways to better support your child in these areas at school & at home

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What if your child is not making the type of progress you believe he should?

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First, define 'not making progress'

- Not able to do homework on own
- Failing all tests and assignments
- Can read at home, but not at school
- Cries or acts out when he come home every day
- Teacher does not stay in communication about progress
- My child is not learning to read
- My child hates going to school or his teacher

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Here's what to do with the school

- Bring on an Educational Therapist or Tutor
- Call for an all school meeting (IEP or teachers and administrators)
- Review accommodations/modifications in place and ensure they are being utilized.
- Discuss additional accommodations/modifications
- Talk to LS (private) or RSP (public) teacher
 - request regular check ins
- Reduce requirements (if appropriate)
 - Less homework
 - Less test questions
 - Adjust writing/reading assignments

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Here's what to do at home

- Think about how homework time can better structured
 - Could you create a devoted space to complete homework that has less distractions?
- Is an earlier bedtime necessary?
- Should screen time be more limited? Confined to weekends?
- Would enrolling in a sport or physical activity after school or on weekends help hone attention and allow for a release of stress?
- Is there a creative outlet, i.e. dance, voice, theatre, art, cooking, pottery that would appeal to your child?

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Tutor or Educational Therapist

<p><u>Tutor</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Years of tutoring aren't addressing my child's learning issues *Tutoring does help my child get his homework done but my child can not do homework on his own *Gives my child a feeling of support *Great if there are not underlying learning issues that are the reason for deficits *Great if a student just needs extra support to get started and stay on task *Can be effective as long as they don't do the homework for the child 	<p><u>Educational Therapist</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Understands how to remediate a child's learning focusing on their strengths *Focuses on improving a student's mindset to be more positive *Helps student change from "Learned Helplessness to Learned Optimism" *Works with specific programs to address learning challenges and deficits *Remediates areas that are challenging to a student *Models how to approach work *Works with parents as an advisory person *Brings in other allied professionals as needed
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Q & A

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